Airports’ Impact on North Carolina’s Economy

North Carolina is served by a robust network of airports. Airports are a critical part of North Carolina’s transportation system, linking our state to the global economy and generating economic activity, commerce, and tourism. Seventy-two publicly owned airports in N.C. are supported annually with funds from the state for infrastructure and development projects. This report shows how these airports are significant economic engines in our state and contribute:

- $31 billion annual economic impact
- 123,400 airport-related jobs
- $913 million in direct government revenue

North Carolina aviation serves everyone in our state. The economic reach of airports extends far beyond pilots and operators by supporting:

- Time-sensitive, high-value cargo and freight transport
- People, both for business and pleasure travel
- Fire fighting and medical emergency
- Search and rescue
- Military
- Agriculture
- Aerospace industry
- Tourism

To see how these impressive numbers were calculated, turn to the blue tabbed pages titled “DATA BY AIRPORT” to view the numbers per each airport.
North Carolina airports contribute to the state's economy primarily through three impact categories:

**DIRECT impacts** result from firms that are directly engaged in the movement of people or goods through an airport, such as airline employees and rental car companies.

**INDIRECT impacts** result from spending by airport-related firms on products and services provided by support businesses, such as office supply companies, property maintenance, and other organizations.

**INDUCED impacts** result from payroll expenditures by employees of directly and indirectly related firms that produce successive spending, such as purchasing a new car, computer, or high-definition television.

The 72 North Carolina public use airports, consisting of 10 commercial air carrier airports and 62 general aviation airports providing vital and considerable economic impacts, are tabulated by group on pages 14 and 15.

The impacts generated from each airport are tabulated by group on pages 14 and 15.

**LEGEND**

- General Aviation 62
- Commercial Aviation 10
- Interstate Highways

The 72 North Carolina public use airports consist of 10 commercial air carrier airports and 62 general aviation airports providing vital and considerable economic impacts. Continued investment in aviation is making North Carolina a leader in the aerospace industry and aviation-driven commerce.

“Airports mean jobs—on the airport, supporting the airport, and supporting the businesses that utilize and rely on them.”

— Bobby Walston, Director NCDOT Division of Aviation
Airports Promote Growth

Businesses frequently evaluate local commercial and general aviation airports when considering new sites for manufacturing operations and corporate headquarters.

Airports play an important role in attracting and retaining businesses in local communities. Communities with access to airport services offer a significant competitive advantage connecting people and goods to the global economy. In an economy highly dependent on high-tech manufacturing jobs, the ability to move time-sensitive, high-value cargo throughout North Carolina is critical.

Since our last airport economic impact study in 2012, the partnership between North Carolina airports and business communities has continued to grow. Airport-related employment has grown 13 percent since 2012, and airports have created an additional $5 billion in annual economic output. In addition to the activity that occurs as a result of airports, an additional $10.5 billion in economic activity is supported by North Carolina’s aerospace manufacturing industry, which results in approximately 42,600 jobs across the state. Airports and aerospace manufacturing support 8.5 percent of North Carolina’s total Gross State Product.

Aircraft primarily transport high-value goods and facilitate the efficient transportation of these goods to consumers. The value of goods transported by air far exceeds that of other modes of transportation.

VALUE PER POUND OF SHIPMENTS BY MODE ($/LB.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tr>
<td>Rail</td>
<td>$0.14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Air/Air + Truck</td>
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* From 2012 statistics

“Aour executives frequently travel to Washington, D.C. and Nashville, Tennessee. Having a good airport in our county means that we can make day trips out of what would otherwise be a three day trip if we flew commercially. The airport is critical to our sales team and our executive team.”

--- Phil Drake, CEO
Drake Enterprises

© North Carolina Global Transpark
North Carolina’s military installations attract private defense companies, which prefer to locate close to military facilities.

Approximately 200,000 military aircraft operations are conducted at public access airports statewide.

Key Military Aviation Locations

1. Pope Field at Fort Bragg Army Base, Fayetteville
2. Seymour Johnson Air Force Base, Goldsboro
3. Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point, Havelock
4. Marine Corps Air Station New River, Jacksonville
5. Elizabeth City Coast Guard Air Station

Each branch of the United States Armed Forces relies on North Carolina airports to conduct military operations in our state. Approximately 200,000 military operations occurred at public access airports in North Carolina in 2014. These operations — conducted by the Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, Marines, Navy, and N.C. National Guard — are crucial for national security and troop preparation.

Local economies in North Carolina also benefit from military presence at our airports. Local businesses provide military personnel with aircraft fuel as well as personal accommodations, meals, and supplies. The majority of our state’s public airports support seasonal, occasional, weekly, or daily military operations.
Unmanned Aircraft Systems

North Carolina law has placed the responsibility of implementing testing and permitting systems for UAS operation with the NCDOT Division of Aviation.

Unmanned aircraft systems (UAS), also called drones, have the potential to change the way we approach agriculture, public safety, construction, and many other important industries in North Carolina. As a leader in UAS/drone implementation, the NCDOT demonstrates the legal way to use this beneficial and safe technology. The Division of Aviation’s goal is to make sure that UAS/drone operations in North Carolina are safe and responsible.

Predictions indicate UAS activities in North Carolina have the potential to create $918 million in annual economic impact and support 1,160 jobs.

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has exclusive authority over the use of airspace in the United States, including airspace used by UAS/drones. North Carolina has authority to implement and manage regulations that pertain to state laws concerning UAS operators and where operations originate and terminate.

With Session Law 2014-100, the North Carolina General Assembly granted the Division of Aviation the responsibility to implement testing and permitting systems for UAS operation in North Carolina.

The Division of Aviation encourages individuals and organizations to take time to make sure they understand and comply with all UAS/drone regulations outlined at www.ncdot.gov/aviation/uas/
Division of Aviation’s Role

The Division of Aviation promotes North Carolina’s economic well-being through air transportation system development and improved aviation safety and education.

The NCDOT Division of Aviation, headquartered and located at Raleigh-Durham International Airport (RDU), is responsible for all aviation functions regarding state airport and aviation system planning and development. It also provides funding to communities for constructing and improving airports throughout the state.

North Carolina has 72 publicly owned airports and nearly 300 privately owned airports. Ten airports have regularly scheduled airline service and four serve international destinations. There are more than 7,000 registered aircraft based in the state and 14,000 licensed pilots.

More than 56 million passengers fly to and from North Carolina each year, and more than 1.3 billion pounds of air freight originate in the state. The Division of Aviation offers a number of services, including NCDOT state aircraft services as well as safety and education support. The Division is also responsible for the operations and maintenance of NCDOT’s four aircraft.

NCDOT’s provides services for state airports, including:
- Airport system planning and development
- Funding for capital improvement projects
- Airport infrastructure maintenance support
- Assistance with state and federal compliance
- Aviation and aerospace advocacy
- Flight services (passenger service, aerial photography, statewide emergency response)
- Safety education and community outreach
- Wildlife hazard management
- Automated Weather Observation System (AWOS) Program
- UAS/drone knowledge testing and permitting
- Airport guides, aeronautical charts, and windsocks

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## ANNUAL ECONOMIC IMPACT

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## JOBS SUPPORTED

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## DATA BY AIRPORT

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## Access the full report online at www.ncdot.gov/aviation
Airports in North Carolina provide $31 billion in economic impact, support 123,400 jobs across the state, and contribute $913 million in government revenue each year.

For more information:
N.C. Department of Transportation
Division of Aviation
1560 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-1560

To download a copy of this booklet and the full report, visit www.ncdot.gov/aviation